

Message Text

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CHUSMTM DHAHRAN NIACT IMMEDIATE
USMTM RIYADH NIACT IMMEDIATE
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GE NIACT IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 3 SANA 3926

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MASS, YE, SA
SUBJ: ARMS FOR YEMEN

BEGIN SUMMARY: YAR REJECTS IMPACT PACKAGE INSISTING
US AGREE TO MUCH LARGER PROGRAM OF DELIVERIES OF ITS OWN
TO YAR. END SUMMARY.

1. ON AUGUST 7 WHEN I RETURNED FROM SAUDI ARABIA,
I REALIZED TASK THAT REMAINED WAS TO SELL IN YAR
PROGRAM THAT HAD BEEN HAMMERED OUT OVER PREVIOUS
SEVERAL WEEKS BETWEEN SAUDIS AND US. THERE WERE,
HOWEVER, NO SAUDIS IN TOWN WHO COULD TALK TO PRESIDENT
AND, IN VIEW OF SALIH'S INSISTENCE ON MUCH LARGER US
ROLE THAN PROGRAM PROPOSED, I CONTACTED FOREIGN MINISTER
ASNAJ TO TALK ABOUT FOREIGN POLICY ASPECTS OF MILITARY
PROPOSALS THAT WOULD BE BROUGHT BY KABBANI-CATHEY
DELEGATION ON 10 AUGUST. ASNAJ REPLIED IN PERSONAL
LETTER THAT HE COULD NOT MEET WITH ME. ANYTHING HAVING

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TO DO WITH MILITARY PROGRAM WOULD HAVE TO BE HANDLED
"IN HEADQUARTERS BY HIGHEST LEVEL OF YAR GOVERNMENT."
HOWEVER, WITHIN HOUR OF ARRIVAL OF NOTE, AHMAD ABDU
SAID SHOWED UP AT MY HOUSE FOR LUNCH TO CARRY MESSAGE
TO ASNAJ. HE SAID ASNAJ WOULD SEE PRESIDENT IN
EVENING.

2. I TOLD SAID THAT MILITARY DELEGATION WAS CARRYING PROPOSAL WHICH EXCELLENT FIRST STEP. IT WOULD, BY ITSELF, INCREASE KEY DEFENSE CAPABILITIES OF YEMEN IN SHORT TIME, BEGIN A NEW AIR FORCE PROGRAM AND PROVIDE POLITICAL TESTIMONY OF NEW US ROLE IN YEMEN IN HIGHLY CONSPICUOUS MANNER. I GAVE SAID NO DETAILS OF THE PROGRAMS.

3. I SAID THAT I HOPED FRIENDS OF THE PRESIDENT WOULD EXPLAIN TO HIM THAT AN ALLIANCE BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND YAR OR A DEFENSE COMMITMENT WAS NOT REALISTIC AND THAT WHILE WE WILLING TO PLAY A DIRECT ROLE IN IMPLEMENTATION, WE SAW COORDINATION BETWEEN US, THE YEMENIS, AND THE SAUDIS AS KEY TO SUCCESS OF THIS PROGRAM. I SAID PROGRAM WAS KEYED TO STAGES WHICH WOULD TEST ABSORPTIVE CAPACITY OF YAR ARMY AND AS THIS PROVEN I THOUGHT PROGRAM COULD EXPAND TO INCLUDE OTHER TYPES OF EQUIPMENT. I SAID IN CONCLUSION THAT I HOPED THAT DEFENSE OF YEMEN WOULD NOT BE VIEWED BY PRESIDENT ENTIRELY AS MILITARY MATTER BUT AS ONE WHICH INVOLVED JUST AS MUCH OR MORE DIPLOMATIC WEAPONS. WE DID NOT WANT TO ESCALATE TENSIONS IN AREA WITH ARMS RACE.

4. DESPITE THIS PREPARATION AND HIGHLY UPBEAT PRESENTATION I GAVE SAID, I WAS APPREHENSIVE AT THOUGHT THAT
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A SAUDI REPRESENTATIVE WOULD NOT SEE SALIH BEFORE MILITARY DELEGATION PRESENTED THE PROGRAM. (SALIH HUDAYAN, SAUDI MILITARY ATTACHE IN YAR AND KEY FIGURE FOR REGIME, WAS SO ILL THAT HE WAS EVACUATED ON FLIGHT WHICH BROUGHT MILITARY DELEGATION.) FORTUNATELY, DELEGATION BROUGHT IN ITS TOW ALI MUSALLIM, HIGHLY PERSUASIVE AND EXPERIENCED SECRETARY TO SAUDI'S SPECIAL COMMITTEE WHICH DEALS WITH YEMEN UNDER SULTAN'S CHAIRMANSHIP. ALI ARRANGED FOR MEETING WITH PRESIDENT FOR HOUR BEFORE MILITARY DELEGATION APPOINTMENT.

5. WHEN DELEGATION ARRIVED FOR MIDAFTERNOON RAMADAN APPOINTMENT, HOWEVER, IT FOUND YAR PRESIDENT ALI ABDALLAH SALIH FASTING AND SLEEPLESS. MUSALLIM SAID LATER THAT PRESIDENT WAS STRAINED NOT ONLY BY RAMADAN BUT BY PITCHED BATTLE WHICH RENEGADE OFFICER MOUJAHID AL-KUHALI HAD PROVOKED IN NORTH OF YEMEN ON THAT DAY AND DAY BEFORE. WHILE CASUALTIES SLIGHT, ISSUES IN CONFRONTATION SEEMED LARGE TO SALIH WHO IS CONVINCED KUHALI IS WORKING WITH FORMER PARATROOP COMMANDER ABDALLAH ABDAL ALIM AND PDRY TO DESTABILIZE YAR.

6. USMTM CHIEF CATHEY HAD PREPARED VERY CLEAR AND LENGTHY ARABIC AND ENGLISH BRIEFING BOOK FOR YEMENIS. GENERAL KABBANI WAS TO BE BRIEFER BUT TURNED MATTER OVER TO CATHEY AFTER VERY BRIEF PREAMBLE.

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7. DISCUSSION GOT NOWHERE FAST. SALIH SAID MUCH LARGER PROGRAM WAS NEEDED TO FACE DANGERS FROM THE SOUTH. HE ASKED CATHEY IF HE HAD AUTHORITY TO NEGOTIATE MILITARY ASSISTANCE DIRECTLY WITH YAR NOTING -- AND KABBANI AGREED -- THAT SAUDIS HAD ACQUIRED TO SUCH A RELATIONSHIP. CATHEY EXPLAINED THAT DIRECT RELATIONSHIP WAS IN IMPLEMENTATION BUT THAT PLANNING WOULD CONTINUE IN COORDINATED ROLE BETWEEN US, SAUDI ARABIA, AND YEMEN. SALIH BORED IN ON WHAT US WOULD DO. POINTING TO BRIEFING BOOK HE SAID "THIS IS SAUDI PLAN. IT HAS ALREADY BEEN AGREED UPON IN PAST. I THOUGHT YOU HAD COME TO DISCUSS NEW SUPPORT AND NEW WEAPONS, TO SIGN NEW AGREEMENTS TO FACE THE NEW THREAT." SALIH SAID PROGRAM AS PROPOSED WOULD ONLY INVITE SOVIET REACTION, CHIEFLY BY DOUBLING OR TRIPLING OF SOVIET AID TO SOUTH YEMEN WHICH HE NOTED WAS ALREADY FAR GREATER THAN ANYONE'S AID TO NORTH YEMEN. SALIH HAMMERED ON POINT THAT PROGRAM WAS FINANCED BY SAUDI ARABIA. AMERICAN CONTRIBUTION
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WAS NEGLIGIBLE.

8. AFTER GENERAL CATHEY HAD MADE SEVERAL EFFORTS TO MOVE TO DISCUSSION OF IMPLEMENTATION OF PROGRAM, SALIH CLEARLY BECAME IMPATIENT AS HE HAD EARLIER DONE WITH MURRAY AND, TO LESSER EXTENT, WITH MYSELF. I POINTED OUT THAT PRESENT MILITARY PROGRAM INVOLVED MORE THAN 150 MILLION DOLLARS FROM US PLUS ANOTHER 100 MILLION DOLLARS FROM FRENCH. IN ANOTHER PORTION OF PROGRAM THERE WAS 150 MILLION DOLLARS FOR MILITARY FACILITIES LIKE THE AIRPORT IN SANA. I NOTED THAT AIR-CRAFT PROGRAM WHICH BEGINNING WOULD SURELY RUN OVER 100 MILLION DOLLARS. WITH UPWARDS OF HALF A BILLION DOLLARS ALREADY IN PIPELINE, US HAD CONCLUDED THAT NEED AT MOMENT WAS NOT MORE AID BUT TO EMPLOY IN BEST AND MOST VIGOROUS MANNER WHAT IS AT HAND. HOWEVER, I NOTED PROGRAM WHICH WE WERE PRESENTING TODAY FELL IN THREE PARTS. FIRST WAS IMPACT PACKAGE WHICH GENERAL CATHEY HAD BRIEFLY DISCUSSED. PROGRAM ALSO HAD MID-RANGE AND LONG-RANGE SEGMENTS WHICH WE WANTED TO DISCUSS IN DETAIL WITH YEMENIS.

9. GENERAL KABBANI CHIMED IN WITH AGREEMENT BUT SALIH CLEARLY INDICATED HE HAD NO PROBLEMS WITH SAUDI AID BUT DID NOT UNDERSTAND WHY UNITED STATES HAD REFUSED TO HELP YEMEN IN THIS TIME OF NEED. "THE THREAT IS NOT ONLY TO YEMEN BUT TO US AS WELL," SAID SALIH. "WHAT WILL BE POSITION OF US IF SOVIET SUPPORTED SOUTH ATTACKS THE YAR?" "RUSSIANS BROUGHT MIG-21'S AND NEW TANKS TO OUR PORT BUT WE REFUSED TO RECEIVE THEM. WHAT IS THE AMERICAN COUNTEROFFER TO THIS?" I REPLIED THAT IF YAR LOOKING FOR PRACTICAL APPROACH THIS PROGRAM WAS GOOD FIRST STEP. I OFFERED ON BEHALF OF USG TO

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SIT WITH YEMENIS TO FORMALLY ANALYZE THREAT FROM SOUTH AND DETERMINE WHAT NEXT STEPS SHOULD BE. I TOLD SALIH USG WAS PLAYING THE MORE DIRECT ROLE WHICH HE HAD ASKED US TO DO. I ASSURED HIM THAT WE WOULD DEAL WITH YARG DIRECTLY. I SAID THAT IF YARG SOUGHT ALLIANCES AND PACTS I DID NOT SEE SUCH IN THE FUTURE BUT I POINTED TO PRESIDENT CARTER'S STATEMENT AS CLEAR AND UNEQUIVOCAL MESSAGE OF SUPPORT FOR YEMENI SECURITY.

10. DISCUSSION CONSUMED MUCH MORE TIME THAN RECORD

HERE INDICATES. LENGHTY SPEECHES BY YAR PRESIDENT SALIH AND GENERAL KABBANI, PLUS ATTEMPTS BY GENERAL CATHEY TO EXPLAIN PROGRAM IN DETAIL, CONSUMED MUCH TIME AND SALIH AFTER HOUR AND FIFTEEN MINUTES RATHER ABRUPTLY ASKED GROUP TO CONTINUE DISCUSSIONS WITH CHIFE OF STAFF. SALIH LEFT THE MEETING WITH ALI MUSALLIM.

11. ATTEMPTS TO CONTINUE BRIEFING WITH CHIEF OF STAFF, ALI SHAYBA, HOWEVER, DIDN'T GET MUCH FURTHER. SHAYBA, FOR INSTANCE, ASKED REPEATEDLY WHETHER US AIM WAS TO GET RID OF RUSSIA. IF SO, HE ADDED, WE WANT A REPLACEMENT. IS THERE A PLAN, SHAYBA ASKED. WHEN TALKS HAD CONTINUED THROUGH BETTER PART OF TWO HOURS AND WITH FATIGUE CLEARLY WEIGHING ON YEMENI AND SAUDI PARTICIPANTS, I WOULD UP MEETING WITH TWO REQUESTS AND ONE OBSERVATION. FIRST, I ASKED FOR CLEAR YAR APPROVAL OR DISAPPROVAL OF IMROGRAM WHICH WE WOULD LEAVE WITH THEM IN DRAFT AND EXPLAIN FURTHER IN MEETINGS OF MILITARY COMMITTEES THAT NIGHT AT 10:00 P.M.

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I SAID WE NEEDED TO KNOW YEMENI VIEW CLEARLY IN ORDER TO GET ON WITH IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS PROGRAM. SECOND, I ASKED YEMENI FRIENDS TO DISTINGUISH BETWEEN POLITICAL SUPPORT AND REQUESTS FOR EQUIPMENT. I SAID WE DISAGREED EVEN WITH OUR CLOSEST FRIENDS ON EQUIPMENT ISSUES BUT

I WANTED YEMENIS TO KNOW THAT WE WERE STANDING WITH THEM. YEMENIS SHOULD ACCEPT THAT US IS SINCERE IN ITS OFFER OF ASSISTANCE AND IT IS GENUINELY CONCERNED ABOUT THREAT FROM THE SOUTH.

12. OBSERVATION CONCERNED THE SOVIETS. ADDRESSING SHAYBA, I NOTED THAT HE KNEW THEM BETTER THAN I FROM HIS MANY YEARS OF STUDY IN THE SOVIET UNION. MY OBSERVATION WAS THAT WHATEVER SOVIETS HAD DONE IN YEMEN IN PAST, TODAY THEIR WEAPONS WERE KILLING YEMENI OFFICERS IN SOUTH AND THEY WERE ALIGNED WITH REGIME WHICH, AS HE ADMITTED, HAD KILLED TWO ARAB PRESIDENTS IN THREE DAYS. IF SOVIETS OFFERED MORE EQUIPMENT TO YAR THAT WOULD SEEM TO BE GREATER DANGER TO YEMEN.

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HOWEVER, DESPITE THIS YEMENIS SHOULD UNDERSTAND "OUR AID IS NOT TIDE TO ANY CONDITION. WE DO NOT ASK YOU TO THROW OUT SOVIETS. THAT IS UP TO YOU. WE ARE PREPARED UNCONDITIONALLY TO WORK WITH YOU TO MEET THREAT FROM THE SOUTH." SHAYBA REITERATED HIS DESIRE FOR -- IT WAS INCREASINGLY OBVIOUS -- MASSIVE US AID. I REPLIED THAT WORST THING THAT COULD HAPPED WOULD BE FOR ARMS RACE TO BEGIN BETWEEN NORTH AND SOUTH YEMEN. YARG CERTAINLY DID NOT WANT SOVIET-US CONFRONTATION IN THE YEMENS. WHAT WE PROPOSED TO DO INSTEAD WAS TRY TO RELAX TENSIONS RATHER THAN RAISE IT. PROGRAM WAS FIRST AND PRACTICAL STEP IN THAT DIRECTION.

13. MILITARY MEETING THAT EVENING -- WHICH I DID NOT ATTEND TO AVOID DISCUSSION OF POLITICAL RATHER THAN PRACTICAL ISSUES -- WAS ONCE AGAIN INCONCLUSIVE. IT LASTED UNTIL MIDNIGHT WITH YEMENIS REPEATING IN DOZENS OF FORMULATIONS THAT OFFER WAS NOT ENOUGH. MUSALLIM HAD INDICATED BEFOREHAND THAT YEMENIS WOULD ACCEPT PLAN IF THEY WERE GIVEN OPPORTUNITY TO FORWARD THEIR REQUESTS FOR OTHER EQUIPMENT TO US AND SAUDI ARABIA AND KABBANI PUSHED THIS HARD DURING EVENING MEETING. PARTICIPANTS GOT IMPRESSION THAT YEMENIS WOULD ACCEPT PROGRAM ALTHOUGH THEY DID NOT LIKE IT. HOWEVER, THROUGHOUT EVENING YEMENI SIDE CONTINUALLY PUSHED AMERICANS TO ASK WHAT WE WERE GOING TO DO FOR YEMEN SEPARATE FROM SAUDIS.

14. FINAL MEETING TOOK PLACE TODAY, FRIDAY, AT 3:00, IN OFFICE OF PRESIDENT. ALI SHAYBA, WITH DEPUTY CHIEF OF STAFF BARADI AND AIR FORCE COMMANDER DAIFALLAH PRESENT, SCATHINGLY REJECTED US PROGRAM. IT WAS OF "NO USE." THERE WAS "NOTHING NEW IN IT." THE

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ANTI-TANK ROCKETS WERE NO SUBSTITUTE FOR TANKS.
RADAR WAS HARDLY WORTHWHILE IF THERE WERE NOT PLANES
TO USE AGAINST ATTACKING FOE. MACHINEGUNS AND MOTARS
WERE HARDLY WORTH MENTIONING FOR ARMY WHICH HAD FOUGHT
AS LONG AND AS HARD AS YEMENI ONE.

15. KABBANI INTERRUPTED SHAYBA REPEATEDLY TO ARGUE WITH
SOME HEAT THAT PROGRAM SHOULD BE GIVEN A CHANCE.
SHAYBA FIRMLY SAID ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS THAT PROGRAM
WAS SUCH THAT HE DID NOT CARE IF IT CAME BY AIR OR SEA.
WHAT HE WANTED WAS TO SEE WHAT US WAS GOING TO DO.
HE PRESENTED LIST OF EQUIPMENT REQUESTS (SEE SEPTTEL)
WHICH BEGINS WITH FIVE SQUADRONS F-5'S. LIST IS
COMPREHENSIVE AND INCLUDES ROCKETS, TANKS, AND ALL
OTHER EQUIPMENT WHICH WOULD GIVE NORTH YEMEN A ONE TO
ONE EQUIVALENCE WITH SOUTH YEMEN.

16. AS KABBANI ARGUED WITH SHAYBA, REPLIES OF THE
YEMENI CHIEF OF STAFF BECAME ANGRIER. HE CLEARLY
QUESTIONED GOOD WILL OF US IN DEALING WITH YEMEN AND
INTELLIGENCE IN NOT UNDERSTANDING THREAT FROM SOUTH.
AT LENGTH I ASKED TO SPEAK AND SAID I WANTED TO THANK
YARG OFFICERS FOR THEIR TIME. I SAID THEY HAD GIVEN ME
ANSWERS TO TWO QUESTIONS I HAD ASKED THE DAY BEFORE
AND FINALLY I WANTED THEM TO KNOW THAT I WOULD TAKE
WITH ME THE LIST OF EQUIPMENT REQUESTS WHICH THEY HAD
PREPARED TO ALLOW MY GOVERNMENT TO CONSIDER IT.
AMERICANS THEN LEFT AFTER HANDSHAKING ALL AROUND.

COMMENT: YEMENIS WERE TAKEN ABACK BY DEPARTURE AND
SHAYBA WAS CLEARLY ANGRY. SAUDIS STAYED BEHIND AS
WELL THEY SHOULD HAVE SINCE THEY WERE THE REAL OBJECTS
OF YEMENI ANGER, I BELIEVE. ATTACKS ON US ARE IN FACT
ATTACKS ON THEM. WITH REJECTION OF IMPACT PACKAGE IF IT
WASN'T TIED TO MASSIVE US AID TO YEMEN, I SAW LITTLE TO
DO IN MEETING. I WAS UNWILLING TO LET YAR IMPUGN OUR

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MOTIVES AND INTELLIGENCE. MY DEPARTURE WAS POLITE.
TO OFFSET ANY CLAIM OF US WALK-OUT I HAVE ASKED
GENERAL CATHEY AND MILITARY COLLEAGUES TO BE AVAILABLE
FOR DINNER WHICH CHIEF OF STAFF HAD PREVIOUSLY SET UP
FOR THIS EVENING. MESSAGE THEY WILL CARRY IS THAT WE
WANT COOPERATE, WANT PROCEED, AND BELIEVE BEST FIRST
STEP IS TO CARRY OUT PROPOSED IMPACT PACKAGE. AS I

SEE ISSUE AT MOMENT OUR AIM SHOULD BE IN SALVAGE
PROGRAM. SAUDIS MAY OF COURSE TURN IT AROUND. THEY
WERE CONVINCED LAST NIGHT -- AS WAS I -- THAT IT
WAS IN BAG. IT WASN'T.
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